



A **SEVTON** S T O R Y

REGINALD ROUTHWICK

LUCKY GUESS



A SEVTON STORY

REGINALD ROUTHWICK



A CONSTITUTION BOOK

“YOU HEARD NOTHING FROM THAT KNAVE,” said Norissa, “and you’re *not* seeing her again either.” She hauled Diane four floors down—with no hesitation or *diè wâdes* to spare anyone. “And for the last forlorn time, stop thinking about those minds from Mensa!”

“But they once promised—”

“Look here, Diane: I just...don’t...*care!*” she shrieked with a grunt. “And besides, neither does anyone around this drab place.”

“I...I still do.”

“Oh, what in the world does it matter?” she said.
“You carry on like that—you’ll soon fall off a ledge.”

“I don’ wan’ die!” bawled Diane.

“But your *brain* sure looks like it. That alone’ll confine you to this town—forever.”

The girl grappled the handle rail for a while. “But this here sure *beats* stayin’ in town!”

“Like Mr. Dickens it does,” continued Norissa. “I mean, I can hear Sebers and Jelsom laughing at you now.”

“Well, I *don’t*!”

“Yes, you have.” Norissa towed her back in line, away from a visiting midshipman’s path. “And believe me, it’s getting worse.” She couldn’t stand a scoundrel

like her anymore; nor could Elliott, and nor could the teachers. Diane should've left when the Brain Team did....

“And face it: you learned nothing valuable from them,” she added. “At all.”

After they both approached the *Bureau*, Norissa ranted on against the idleness that plagued her so-called “friend”. The concierge believed her, issued a secret verdict, and formed a smile leftwards with his teeth in front. Perhaps he'd watched too many gangster movies in another life.

“Okay, *chère*,” he told Diane in a gravel voice. “Get this one right—we’ll see ya back on *za ’leventh*.”

And please go somewhere else in the meantime.

Facing the slacker, Monsieur Balthazar produced a small crinkled slip from his pocket, cleared his throat, and dictated from it: “What is the capital—and largest city—of Massachusetts?”

“And please,” Norissa told the guests nearby, “let no one assist her.” Even the residents of Accompong should know that one. Either way, no consolation prizes.

After a minute, the ensemble heard nothing but “uhhs”, “ahhs” and stutters out of today’s special contestant. And then the wunderkind saw some glimmer of hope—perhaps not—as Diane nodded in a flash.

“Uh...Massa...” she slurred.

Get ready. You asked for it.

“Eh...” The girl slowly gave it her best shot: “Uh, Massa...chusetts City?”

At this point, only the clanks of Saint-Cloud chinaware and fancy utensils filled the room. Along with the scream of one dismayed patron: “*Incroyable!*”

As far as things went, he chose the right word.

Diane’s head had *really* gone astray—and Norissa could still tell: The concierge ripped off his wig so hard, he rubbed some of the red spots on his scalp with Corti-zone.

“*Désolé, Madame.* We’re not trusting you any longer here.” (Norissa noticed how one word came off as “vonga”.) “Seems I have no choice myself but to—”

“Wait, sir,” wailed Diane. “ ’Fore I leave...what’s the answer?”

Balthazar turned around and faced her. “Paul Revere’s favorite rock band,” he replied. “Hope this helps your matters.”

“Thanks. Sure ’preciate—”

“*Non, non, non.* Don’t you get it?” he said. “It’s a riddle—everyone in town can solve *that* one in seconds. You should, too.”

It’ll take her hours. I know her already.

“Seriously,” sobbed Diane, “I can’t.”

“ ‘Can’t’? That’s another *cancer* I *can’t* put up with.”

“Oh, please,” she shouted. “Just give me the real answer already!”

“Give me your atlas,” he said, stretching his hand, “and I’ll show you.”

Diane went to fetch her bag, but stopped after only two steps. “ ‘Atlas’?” she mumbled. “Uh, what’s that again?”

Balthazar’s face froze up: his eyes got sealed in a straight line, and his mouth formed a frown. Only one other person exhibited this attitude before Norissa: the principal of St. Martin’s. “What, a schoolchild like you never even heard of *one*?!” he bellowed, slamming his guest logs upon the booth. “I mean, have you *ever* once thought of those malnourished youth in the Sahel who’ve never once *read* Uncle Arthur?”

Yep. Danziger’s calling your name, all right.

“Say...wh...what were you ’ferring to again?” Diane’s voice disintegrated as she spoke.

The concierge’s morosity persisted as he melted away with a sigh, then nodded in disbelief and lisped a “*Sacrebleu*” under his breath. After regaining normal posture on his chair, he put away the slip, feeling unconcerned. “That’s it. That is so about it,” he declared. Taking one exhale, he told the girl: “For all I care, be glad I gave you a great idea or two—or three—for homework. You can start with the library.” (To which Norissa grinned in approval.) “And don’t come back till you’ve done it.” He stressed out the last two words.

If Elaine were in charge of tomorrow’s headlines,

this tidbit should delight everyone else inside—especially the wunderkind.

SHAME OF A NATION

**Ten-year-old loiters her way into
low IQ level**



“*Vas-y*, street worm,” she ordered, “before they shame us further.” By now, some of the clerks threatened to explode into a fit of groans, grumbles and indecent mumbling. “And don’t you *even* complain.”

Both girls grabbed their goods, lurched out towards the sidewalk, and heard Balthazar slam the door behind them with a *CLATCH*. And that did it—until March 18th. Norissa looked on with a restrained snicker, as Diane cried and grunted and kicked wrappers and thrust garbage bins all across the next two blocks of Alma Street, screaming and stomping her feet upon the grooved concrete slabs. *We warned her—she won't listen.* Some passers-by tried calming her down; others stared at her with long faces. An old lady with a *bindi* remarked, “Oh, boy. I can tell you're possessed.” (Maybe more so than Norissa herself.) Whatever the reaction, everyone wagged their heads and carried on with their daily business. Dumb Dora was so dumb, she deserved

her comeuppance. And the wunderkind knew it would happen from their first day together at English class, two grades ago—not that she wished to remember. *See if we'll still bond by next year. And I'm not worrying.*

Within minutes, the angst subsided as Diane gave her last “Eunhh!” and rushed her bike upon Dell Street...in the wrong direction. *What further distress does this damsel want to report? Slow news day...happens all the time here. Shropshire, that is.*

Why, oh why, did Fate assign Norissa a comrade like her? They should be heading up north instead; the same shenanigans that embarrassed the *Ambassade* crew would surely boost attendance at her home turf.

After they saw her bring in a blindfolded Diane, those patrons would cause twice the chaos. Around every reading table, they'd guffaw and gripe and bang their fists like chimps, until they plunged down to the floor in exhaustion. All this, while St. George's Head of Acquisitions gave himself a facepalm...

No sooner did she finish visualizing that very possibility than she continued waiting—on a red light at Richley and Ormond. The edge of Welkeston already! Right after the signal turned green, she sped off and followed Diane's trail. *Breaking news from the Pigeonhole Pundit: Mom and Dad just left (you behind) yesterday.*

Six junctions away from the Crusader offices—and then her secret weapon rumbled out a few waves upon

her back. She crossed Jordan Lane, rested on a corner-stone, and unzipped the front lap of her bag.

One of her uncles, Moses, needed her in twenty minutes. And now she was three and a half miles too far from Leopold. Where else in this part of Trouvaille could Diane venture off into?

Once we head back, you've got your lackadaisical cater-cousin to blame. You took ten minutes off my time!

to be continued...

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, events, brands, companies and organizations mentioned within are either the product of the author's imagination, or are used in a fictional manner. Any resemblance to actual material, incidents, or persons (living or dead) is entirely coincidental.

LUCKY GUESS: A SEVTON STORY

This installment published in November 2011 by

CONSTITUTION BOOKS

Waterbury, CT 06710

sevton.weebly.com



SOME RIGHTS RESERVED: Licensed under the provisions of CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION 3.0 UNPORTED. To view the license, visit www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/, or write to: Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.



COPYLEFT: This work of art is free; you can redistribute it and/or modify it according to the terms of the FREE ART LICENSE. You will find a specimen of this license on the Copyleft Attitude site (www.artlibre.org/licence/lal/en) as well as on other websites.



Reproduction, distribution and derivatives of this work are permissible under Piratbyrån's KOPIMI clause (www.kopimi.com/kopimi/). Go right ahead now!



Copying art is an act of love. Please copy and share.

—Nina Paley, copyheart.org



A CONSTITUTION BOOK

C-002

MADE IN THE U.S.A.